

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

Basmatchian, a dignitary of the Church hierarchy in Constantinople, was compelled to co-operate with the secret police. In the latter case, Basmatchian had been about to be consecrated bishop and for that reason had had to appear personally in Echmiadzin. The Soviet Consulate at Constantinople, however, had stubbornly refused to issue him a visa unless Basmatchian promised that he would perform certain tasks for the G.P.U. upon his appointment as bishop. Playing thus on the man's ambition, Soviet authorities finally obtained the desired end: Basmatchian, according to Agabekov, entered into the service of the G.P.U.

Another example of the use of Armenians as G.P.U. agents is the bribing of Dr. Gazarian, ex-member of the Dashnak Central Committee, who was persuaded to edit in Teheran an Armenian newspaper *Gahapar* in which he was to praise the Soviet Union. The doctor was given as compensation, apart from his regular subsidy, an internship in the Soviet Hospital in Teheran. A Society for Aid to Armenians in Iran's capital was utilized as a convenient front for political and espionage activities. Agabekov reports that its president, Dr. Caro Minasian, was the personal physician of Sheikh Kliazal of Mohammera (Khorramshahr), who in turn depended much on British support in his land claims against the Iranian government. Minasian, having easy access to the Sheikh, gained his confidence and was able to report to the G.P.U. the details of Khazal's dealings with the British.

As a result of the new program adopted by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928,<sup>40</sup> fresh instructions were sent to the G.P.U. Resident General in Iran. They provided for an

increased study of the tribal affairs in Iran and an extension of work to southern Iran and India. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Khuzistan was to be the subject of an intensified study. In compliance with these orders the G.P.U. Resident General undertook a round trip through southern Iran, visiting Qum, Isfahan, Shiraz, Bushire, Yazd, and Kashan. Soviet consulates in this part of the country were inspected and new agents recruited. The next development was the final change of the G.P.U. system in Iran from legal into secret. Agabekov, the legal Resident General, was recalled to Moscow. Triandophiloff,  
40 See Chapter Five.